

ABSTRACT

The invention concerns a system and method enabling the copying of documents. It has specific application to the archiving and retrieval, and the scanning and reproduction, of documents which are or which may be capable of interacting with a computer system or network. Such a document has coded data printed on it allowing it to interact with the computer system or network by use of a sensing device operated by a user.

Specifically, the method involves scanning a document which may contain both document information and coded data indicative of an identity of the document, forming a digital image of the document, and detecting, if the document contains said coded data indicative of the identity of the document, the coded data. If the document does contain such coded data, stored data representing the content of the document is accessed, and, depending on the operating instructions, either a copy of the document is printed, together with coded data indicative of an identity of the copy being printed on the copy, or data representing a copy of the document is stored, the stored data including a unique identifier for said copy.

The invention can be employed for the printing of documents, the archiving and retrieval of documents, and the scanning and reproduction of documents. In copying documents, it can be used to produce pages of far higher quality than those produced by conventional photocopying means, often irrespective of the physical quality of the page to be copied.

(Figure 6)